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Jordan

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Country Report

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Report Highlights:

This report covers updates to Jordan's food and agricultural import regulations and standards

Includes PSD Changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Annual Report

Amman [JO1]

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JORDAN: FOOD IMPORT REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

DISCLAIMER: the Agricultural Trade Office of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Amman, Jordan has prepared this report for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care has been taken in the preparation of this report, the information provided might be dated, as some import requirements are subject to frequent change. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters ensure that all necessary customs clearance requirements have been verified with local authorities through your foreign importer before the sale conditions are finalized. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS ALWAYS SUBJECT TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY THE COUNTRY OF IMPORT AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

SECTION I. FOOD LAWS

Jordan has been a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) since 2000, the accession to membership coincided with structural reforms, both economic and legislative, reforms to match international standards and requirement. As a result, the current food control regime in Jordan falls under two laws: The Agriculture Law No. 44 of 2002 and Jordanian Food Control Law No. 32 of 2003 which were adopted at the Aqaba Special Economic Customs Center in May 2002 and at Amman Customs Center in January 2004. Food products are classified in three tiers according to the associated health risk.

Inspection criteria will be codified into a computerized system. This system will be applied at all border centers once the infrastructure for these centers is completed. A border committee comprised of representatives from the following agencies inspects Imported agricultural and food products: -

- The Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA: www.jfda.jo),
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA: www.moa.gov.jo),
- The Jordan Institute for Standards and Metrology (JISM www.jism.gov.jo),
- Customs department (JCD: www.customs.gov.jo).

The criteria and the levels of inspection are based on three categories: high, medium and low risk.

- High-risk products 80 – 100 percent inspection
- Medium risk products 25 – 50 percent inspection
- Low risk products 5 – 10 percent inspection

In all cases a document review is mandatory regardless of the category or level of inspection.

Importers are required to insure for any human health hazards associated with trade in a form of microbial, parasitical and fungal contamination. Import consignments are routinely tested for radiation levels and chemical contaminants, including heavy metals, hormones and residue from medicines. Food additives are determined by testing. Less frequent testing is done for pesticide residues.

Importers of drugs, including vaccines and sera for human use and food are required to meet Ministry of Health's technical regulations. Importers of veterinary medicines, sera, vaccines, pesticides, meat, fertilizer, animal feed, and seedlings is require to meet Ministry of Agriculture technical regulations. A committee comprising officials from JISM, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and the customs department carry out inspections of food and agriculture products at the border, Jordan applies internationally recognized standards when these are available.

Monitoring of imported food for compliance with Jordan's technical regulations and other international standards is done on a risk-based system.

SECTION II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

A. Labeling requirements are set by the Institute of Standards and Metrology. Legal requirements for labeling are fairly standard although a statement of ingredients in order of preponderance is not required. All labels must either be in Arabic or have a stick-on label in Arabic. In general, the label should contain the name of the product, the manufacturer's name and address, net weight, fortifying matter (like added vitamins and minerals to powder milk), lot number and "use before" or "best before" date. Local labeling requirements do not include Recommended Daily Intake (RDIs).

Shelf life: This requirement was replaced by the -"Best Before"- standard.

B. Nutritional labeling is mandatory in certain categories of food including infant formula, food for dietary use, etc.

Web-site: www.jism.gov.jo

Please refer to contact information in APPENDIX II

SECTION III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS

No specific restrictions are applied to the type of packaging used. No restrictions are applied to either packaging or container type at the Port of Aqaba (Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority <http://www.aqabazone.com/>). However, a maximum weight restriction of 30.5 tons is applied to the discharging of the container at the gantry crane of 30.5 tons. Units weighing more than 30.5 tons will be discharged using shore cranes.

There is no special municipal waste disposal law at the port. In case cargo needs to be disposed of, an application is filed at the concerned department at the port (i.e. customs, environment), and the request is approved or rejected according to the type of cargo and its expected damage to the environment (Ministry of Environment <http://www.moenv.gov.jo>).

SECTION IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

Food additives are regulated by JISM and JFDA. In general, permissible additives and their concentrations are those approved by the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission. However, the technical standards for foods contain specific lists for food additive and their permissible levels of use. These standards should be consulted to make sure that additives are permitted.

Please refer to contact information in APPENDIX II

SECTION V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINATES

Pesticides in Jordan are regulated by Ministry of Agriculture (MoA www.moa.gov.jo), Plant Protection Directorate/ Pesticides Division, each imported pesticide shall be analyzed for conformity in composition and concentration, using the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) standards if it is an agricultural pesticide, and using the World Health Organization (WHO) if it is a public health pesticide.

Pesticides residue in the food chain in Jordan is a sensitive issue. There is only one laboratory in Jordan that is capable of testing for pesticide residues in fresh fruits and vegetables, and its turn-around time is about two weeks. Therefore, it is not possible to test fresh products and get a result before the fresh products are consumed. However, non-perishable local and imported agricultural products may be tested for pesticide residue. The technical standards for food and agricultural products require that a pesticide residue does not exceed the recommended maximum residue levels of the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission.

SECTION VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Any imported agricultural or food product may be inspected and tested to ensure that it is fit for human consumption. Virtually all prepared and mixed foods are tested at the border.

The JFDA has the authority to inspect food products at the retail and wholesale distribution levels. A representative may enter any place and collect samples for testing. If a product fails to meet technical requirements or is found unfit for human consumption, it is removed from distribution channels and destroyed.

SECTION VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS

Jordan Institution for Standards and Metrology (JISM) is the official body for the preparation and publication of Jordanian Standards. The main tasks of JISM are to (i) prepare, approve, revise and amend Jordanian mandatory or voluntary standards and monitor their application; (ii) maintain a national system for metrology and supervise its implementation; (iii) approve quality marks and certificates of conformity; (v) adopt and approve standards of other countries and of Arab, regional and international organizations, provided that such standards were issued in Arabic or English; and (vi) to cooperate and coordinate with Arab, regional and international institutions in the area of standardization and metrology. JISM is a participating member of the Arab Organization for Industrial Development and Mining (AIDMO), a corresponding member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), a corresponding member of the International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML), and a contact point for the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

All imported foods should conform to the Jordanian standards issued by JISM. All agricultural products may be imported by the private sector (with the exception of wheat and barley) if the products meet local quality standards, which are set by JISM on the basis of the *Codex Alimentarius* (<http://www.codexalimentarius.net>, www.jism.gov.jo). In 2003, JISM instituted a pre-shipment inspection program, which is entirely voluntary for food importers. Import licenses are not required for most imported goods. Some products require prior approval from either the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Agricultural products for which prior approval is required from the Ministry of Agriculture are live animals, fresh, chilled and frozen meat and frozen animal semen, and powdered milk for adults and babies.

Ministry of Agriculture requires a prior approval as a condition to ensure that the animals and animal products meet local health standards issued by JISM. The importation of special flour and powdered milk for manufacturing purposes is subject to prior approval from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture. Importation of rice, sugar, and wheat derivatives has been liberalized. The private sector may import these items into Jordan if prevailing customs duties and taxes are paid, and the product meets local quality standards. Alcoholic beverages may be imported into Jordan, but high tariffs are applied (50-180 percent) – as a revenue source for the government

SECTION VIII. COPYRIGHT AND TRADEMARK LAWS

The legal system facilitates and protects the acquisition and disposition of all property rights.

Prior to its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Jordan passed several new laws to improve the protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), patents, copyrights and trademarks. TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)-consistent laws now protect trade secrets, plant varieties and semiconductor chip designs. The law requires registration of copyrights, patents and trademarks. Copyrights must be registered at the National Library, part of the Ministry of Culture. Patents must be registered with the Registrar of Patents and Trademarks at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Jordan is in the process of acceding to the Patent Cooperation Treaty and to the protocol relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the registration of marks by the end of 2004, but Jordan parliament did not address the legislations issue yet.

Jordan is a full member of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) since May 24, 2004, and a full member of Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), since October 24, 2004.

SECTION IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES

As a member of the WTO, Jordan must reduce its import tariff ceiling to 20 percent. Under the terms of the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA), import duties and other trade barriers between Jordan and the United States must be phased out by 2010, with tariffs less than 5 percent having already been eliminated. Companies operating in the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) gain quota and duty-free access to the U.S. market and benefit from special import provisions for raw inputs (<http://www.justrade.jo/>) also see (www.customs.gov.jo).

CUSTOMS VALUATION:

The customs law of 1999 was amended in March 2000 to include GATT-compliant criteria for customs valuation (which is based on certified invoices) and to make the valuation process more transparent. The law restricts customs officers' mandate to use arbitrary valuation but still rewards those who uncover invoice misreporting and imposes penalties on importers.

The customs valuation price is CIF-based. The value of the imported good is converted into JD at the official central bank exchange rate (1 JD = USD 1.41). In some cases, invoice or export discounts have been included in the valuation by the customs department. Still, the exporter should consult the local importer to determine how to best grant any such discounts or rebates (www.customs.gov.jo).

IMPORT TAXES AND OTHER RELATED FEES:

Custom tariffs are based on the Harmonized System coding practice. Under the terms of the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the majority of tariffs are to be phased out over a 10-year period (year one being 2001.) The tariff schedule may be accessed at the following web site: (www.customs.gov.jo).

Imported products and locally produced goods are subject to a 16 percent value-added tax (VAT).

The VAT on imported products is based on the cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value at the border. Goods such as pharmaceutical products and agricultural goods are exempt from the 16 percent sales tax. There is a special sales tax that applies to specific items such as, but not limited to, vehicles, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages and lubricants. The tax rate on these items varies. Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are subject to a 13 percent general sales tax in addition to the special sales tax. Non-basic foodstuffs are subject to a 4 percent general sales tax. For a complete description of these commodities and detailed lists of the general and special sales tax, please visit Jordan's General Sales Tax Department's website at www.gst.gov.jo.

Import licenses are required for imports of:

- Non-commercial shipments exceeding JD 2,000 in value
- Biscuits of all types
- Mineral water
- Dried milk for industry
- Items requiring prior clearance from specific authorities (for a complete list, see "**special import provisions**" below)

Goods entering the country under temporary entry status, bonded goods and goods benefiting from the investment promotion law are exempt from import licenses (refer to www.jordaninvestment.com).

All Jordanian and foreign trading companies must obtain an importer's card from the Ministry of Industry and Trade for customs clearance purposes. At the Ministry, a complete and updated list of all import requirements and provisions is periodically issued. For non-trading entities such as banks, hospitals and hotels, the ministry issues a special, "limited" card that allows the import of goods specific to that entity's purpose.

Import / Export Documentation

According to Article 31 of the Customs Law of 1998 and its amendments, every customs declaration must include the following:

- Maritime or air bill of lading.
- Commercial invoice indicating value, weight, freight and insurance charges etc.
- All invoices should be notarized by the Jordanian diplomatic mission in the country of origin. Certification by the local chamber of commerce is sufficient, subject to the approval of the customs department director, in cases where a Jordanian consulate is not available.
- A notarized certificate of origin issued by the relevant authority in the exporter's local area.
- Value declaration form for shipments exceeding JD 2,000 (USD 2,820).

The customs department may request other documents related to the shipment as needed.

All invoices should describe the imported goods in Arabic.

Jordan Customs developed and launched the Customs Integrated Tariff System (CITS) in Aug/2005; Web site: <http://www.customs.gov.jo> to assist importers.

Importers can use this system to track down commodity tariffs, import conditions and commodity trade agreements, for example to find out custom tariffs for Apples imported from USA in July under Jordan–USA FTA agreement - log into the CITS system for information pertaining to commodity trade, customs and tariff and commercial agreements as well as the governmental requirements for these commodities from the ministries and departments, if you apply the June US Apples example, you'll find that trade between USA and Jordan enjoy preferential treatment of lower customs tariff while in June you have to pay extra *advalorem* fee, and you need the approval of Ministry of Agriculture to import apples.

The (CITS) System allows an importer to review all regulations and requirements of the commodity trade; all (CITS) system information is in Arabic and English.

The (CITS) system provides information on the trade activity and mechanisms of searching for goods through the Customs Tariff Tables, the trade agreements, coding decisions, proclamations, circulations and requirements related to the Customs Tariff Harmonized System.

Special Import Provisions

Pre-import clearance is required for certain goods. The clearance, once obtained, acts as an import license. However, these clearances are not automatic.

The relevant pre-import license-issuing agency and the respective goods include:
Ministry of Industry and Trade (these are given out in the form of import licenses): rice, flour and its by-products, sugar, wheat, barely and corn;

Ministry of Agriculture: frozen animal semen, live animals, fresh/frozen meat, embalmed wild animals, imported milk products from countries engaged in bilateral trade protocols with Jordan;

Ministry of Health: all types of medical drugs and antibiotics, food supplements for athletes, potassium bromide, food dyes, asbestos pipes and panels, frozen ice cream, baby food and milk, laser pens, oxygen and nitrogen oxide and other medical equipment.

If a shipment is rejected, there is an appeal system and this is subject to the approval of the ministry under which the rejection took place.

APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

Jordan Food & Drug Directorate
Tel: (962-6) 4612663
Fax: (962-6) 4612663
Web-site: www.jfda.jo

Ministry of Industry and Trade
Tel: (962-6) 560-7191/5663774
Fax: (962-6) 560-4691
Web-site: www.mit.gov.jo

Ministry of Agriculture
Veterinary Services Directorate
OR
Plant Protection Directorate
Tel: (962-6) 5686151
Fax: (962-6) 5686310
Web-site: www.moa.gov.jo

Jordan Institute of Standards and Metrology
Tel: (962-6) 5680139
Fax: (962-6) 5681099
Web-site: www.jism.gov.jo

Jordan Customs Department
P.O.Box 90, Amman, Jordan
Tel: (962-6) 462-3186/8; 462-4394/6
Fax: (962-6) 464-7791
E-mail: Customs@Customs.gov.jo
Web-site: <http://www.customs.gov.jo>

Ministry of Environment
Tel: + (962-6) 5560113
Fax: + (962-6) 5560288
Web-site: <http://www.moenv.gov.jo/>

Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority
P.O.Box 2565, Aqaba 77110, Jordan
Tel: + (962-6) 3 203 5757/8
Fax: + (962-6) 3 203 0912
Web-site: <http://www.aqabazone.com/>

APPENDIX II: OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS

For further help, please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs, American Embassy, POBox 354, Amman, Jordan, Phone: (962-6) 5906056, Fax: (962-6) 5920146, E-Mail: Mohamed.khraishy@usda.gov